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REPORT (PART II)

ON

NATIVE-OWNED ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS IN BENGAL

FOR THE

Week ending Saturday, 21st February 1903.

CONTENTS.

II.—Home Administration.

(a)—*Police.*

200. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* relates that Babu Ghumandi Ram Agarwala, one of the richest and most highly respected Marwari merchants of Dinajpur, was arrested and subjected to various indignities by the police in connection with a case of burglary in which the police desired the conviction of the accused. After the conviction had been obtained, the Babu was rearrested and handcuffed, this time on the charge of being in possession of stolen property. Was ever man twice arrested in connection with the same case? This proves how police rule is emasculating even the highest in the land.

A case at Dinajpur.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 16th Feb. 1903.

(d)—*Education.*

201. Referring to the agitation of the students of the Patna College to temporarily close the College and Collegiate School in view of the plague in that town, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* remarks that the Principal is doubtless actuated by the best of motives and has his reasons for not closing the College. But then it should occur to him what an awful responsibility he takes upon himself by this bold action.

Plague in Patna.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 16th Feb. 1903.

202. Referring to the outbreak of plague in the Patna Collegiate School, the *Bengalee* strongly condemns both the action of the Director of Public Instruction in failing to close the school, and that of the Principal in not taking any measures to have the premises thoroughly disinfected. The students were panic-stricken, and the attendance fell to 12 a day. The school may probably be deserted by now. It complains that the authorities have shown an utter indifference to the safety of the students.

Plague in the Patna Collegiate School.

Bengalee, 17th Feb. 1903.

(e)—*Local Self-Government and Municipal Administration.*

203. Commenting on the endeavours made by Mr. Greer to induce the old Commissioners to stand for election, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* states that if any such is persuaded to re-enter the Corporation, he will find his position intolerable among his own people.

The Calcutta Municipality.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 14th Feb. 1903.

Lord Curzon seems to be labouring under the impression that the present Corporation is doing splendid work. A visit to the northern quarter of the town would soon convince him of the sufferings of the Indian citizens. Their streets are dimly lighted; the roads are full of ruts and holes; they do not get water when they want it, and sometimes have to go without it for days together. At present they have none to look after their needs or to whom they can relate their grievances. It is the Indian citizens and not the European residents of Calcutta who maintain the Corporation, and the proposed plan for improving the town, which is before the Government, should be submitted to Indian representatives, and not only to the Corporation, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Trades' Association.

205. The *Indian Mirror* draws the attention of the authorities to the dirty state of the Gardens in the morning and to the fact that in spite of the printed notices, European cyclists persist in cycling through the gardens, probably as they provide short cuts to places of business.

The Eden Gardens.

Indian Mirror, 20th Feb. 1903.

(f)—*Questions affecting the land.*

206. The Agricultural Department is pronounced by the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* to be in a most neglected condition. It is manned by a staff of officers who not having any future prospects leave it for good as soon as they have acquired some experience. The history of the Department shows that not a single officer has remained in it for more than five years. The *Patrika* recounts the names of those who have done excellent work in this connection, and concludes with the

The Agricultural Department.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 17th Feb. 1903.

remark that the present Director, who has submitted a scheme for the improvement of the Department, leaves it after one and-a-half years' service.

(*h*)—*General.*

AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA, 14th Feb. 1903.

Treatment accorded to Indians by their rulers.

207. Under the heading "two stories," the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* relates two incidents illustrative of the manner in which Indians are reminded of the fact that they are despotically ruled by an alien race. One is the case of Babu Brajendra Coomar Seal, a retired District Judge, whose visit to Maulvi A. Salam, Deputy Magistrate of Puri, led Mr. Fischer, the autocrat of Cuttack, to tell the well-known Barrister, Mr. P. L. Roy, that Mr. Seal had gone to influence the Deputy Magistrate improperly in favour of a client. This utterly false allegation was based on information not obtained judicially but from a backbiter. On the High Court being approached for redress, the Judges disposed of the case by noting that the observation was made under a mistake, and that if Mr. Seal communicated with Mr. Fischer, the matter would be satisfactorily determined.

The other incident refers to an instance in which an Indian entering a first class compartment of a railway carriage, occupied by a civilian and a military officer, was abused by the latter, who remarked that a nigger had no business to travel first-class, and considered it an insult to travel in company with a nigger. The redeeming feature of this case is that the civilian felt ashamed of the conduct of his countryman and took up the cause of the helpless Indian gentleman. The officer's behaviour getting more obnoxious, the civilian., who was a Justice of Peace for all India, after some difficulty obtained his name and had him departmentally punished.

In conclusion the *Patrika* would like to know how the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal has taken notice of Mr. Fischer's conduct.

BENGALEE, 15th Feb. 1903.

The Customs Service.

208. The *Bengalee* is of the same opinion as the Bombay Chamber of Commerce that the Collector of Customs should, in view of the growing interests of the commerce and trade of India, be a specialist. It would go further and say that no reform of the Customs Service would be worth the name which would leave untouched the glaring injustice done to men of purely Indian blood by their exclusion from the service.

AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA, 16th Feb. 1903

Some recent appointments in Bengal.

209. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* expresses its approval of the selections made by the Viceroy of Sir Andrew Fraser as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal and of the Honorable Mr. Bolton as Chief Commissioner of Assam.

It also acknowledges the fitness of the appointment of Mr. Finucane to the Board of Revenue, and of Mr. Hare to the Chief Secretaryship and testifies to Mr. Stephenson having won golden opinions during his incumbency as Chief Secretary.

AMRTA BAZAR PATRIKA, 16th Feb. 1903.

Mr. Pennell.

210. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* referring to Mr. Pennell's enrolment as an Advocate of the Rangoon Chief Court, says that the High Court here must find itself in rather a queer position by pronouncing that Mr. Pennell was not entitled to practice as a Barrister in this country. Unless the Calcutta High Court publishes its reasons for the step it took, the general public would be justified in holding that it really played into the hands of the Government of Bengal.

Mr. Pennell's action in the Noakhali case was justified by the judgment of Mr. Geidt, in spite of the decision of Justices Amir Ali and Pratt, and yet he was punished for having tried to do his duty, while the High Court Judges escaped from any punishment, though they were wrong and did not do their duty properly.

211. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, touching on the delay of the Calcutta High Court in replying to the Rangoon Court's reference regarding Mr. Pennell, writes as follows about his admission to the Rangoon Bar:— AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA, 17th Feb. 1903.

Mr. Pennell.

"It reflects great credit to the Chief Court of Rangoon that in spite of the deep-rooted bais of the Calcutta High Court against Mr. Pennell, it has righted a great wrong from which the latter has been suffering, not that he was guilty of any immoral act, but because he was too independent and too just."

212. The *Indian Mirror* congratulates Mr. Pennell on his admission to the Burma Bar and the Judges for having accorded him permission to practice in the Chief Court and the Courts subordinate to it. Mr. Pennell courted his own fall by his bad temper and worse language, and he is perhaps best out of Bengal, where further misfortunes might have been in store for him. The journal wishes him all good-luck and every success in his new career. INDIAN MIRROR, 17th Feb. 1903.

Ibid.

213. The *Bengalee* wishes Mr. Pennell every success in his new profession, so that he may live to look back upon the severance of his connection with the Civil Service without a pang of regret or disappointment, but on the contrary with a feeling of satisfaction and relief that his dismissal should have indeed proved a blessing in disguise. BENGALEE, 18th Feb. 1903.

Ibid.

214. The *Hindoo Patriot* protests against the Collectorship of Calcutta passing out of the Provincial Service, and hopes and trusts the Hon'ble Mr. Bourdillon will not allow this serious and undeserved injustice to be perpetrated. HINDOO PATRIOT, 18th Feb. 1903.

The Calcutta Collectorate.

215. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* draws attention to the interference on the part of Mr. Fischer, the Magistrate of Cuttack, in transferring to his own file the case in which the Deputy Magistrate, Maulvi A. Salam, was about to frame charges against the Police for entering the house of the Puri Raja and dismissing the accused. AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA, 21st Feb. 1903.

Mr. Fischer, the Magistrate of Cuttack.

Lord George Hamilton was, the other day, congratulating himself on the British Government having supplied the Indians with a impartial system of justice!

IV.—NATIVE STATES.

216. Sivaji Rao Holkar, says the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, owes his downfall, at least partly, to the machinations of some of his own relations. An emissary of one of the latter sent the *Patrika* a copy of a memorial addressed to the Government of India in which Sivaji Rao was depicted in horrid colours. The journal was requested not only to publish the document in its colomns, but gibbet His Highness to infamy by its own remarks. All sorts of temptations were, of course, placed before the *Patrika* if it would agree to use its pen against Sivaji Rao, but the offer was declined with scorn. A contemporary, who readily opened its columns to villify the Holkar and called upon the Government of India to interfere and protect the people of Indore from oppressions of their ruler, is now the loudest in its denunciation of the measures adopted. AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA, 13th Feb. 1903.

Sivaji Rao Holkar.

217. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* would like it declared in a straightforward manner that the *ex*-Maharaja Holkar abdicated voluntarily, and it will either accept the statement or show why it cannot do so. It finds the *Pioneer* itself indirectly admitting that the abdication was not voluntary. It is said that Holkar was notorious for his hot temper. But has that temper betrayed him to an act which would cause the forfeiture of his rights? European servants of the Government have caused the death of natives and have yet retained their appointments. Has Holkar given evidence of such fiery temper? If so, those instances should be made known. Otherwise why should he lose his *guddi* for acts which would not disqualify a European employé of the Government from holding his appointment? AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA, 16th Feb. 1903.

Ibid.

KAYASTHA MESSENGER, 16th Feb. 1903.

The Indore State

218. The *Kayastha Messenger* does not think that the change of rulers in the principality of Indore will be viewed complacently by the Native Chiefs of India, especially when it takes place immediately after the Coronation Durbar at Delhi. The policy of the British Government should, in its opinion, be to maintain the Native States in their high position of honour and dignity and try to make them strong pillars of State.

AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA, 18th Feb. 1903.

Ibid.

219. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* suggests that the able among the Mahrattas and Poona Brahmins, interested in the the Holkar Administration, should exert themselves to secure a purely Indian Administration for the State, and after finding a man fitted to be the Prime Minister, prepare a constitution in which the Resident would be given the place only of a friendly adviser and nothing more. Such a scheme should be submitted to the Viceroy, whose pro-Hindu feelings will secure its acceptance.

BEHAR HERALD, 18th Feb. 1903.

Ibid.

220. The *Behar Herald* is keenly disappointed at the Government accepting Sivaji Rao Holkar's abdication in this "year of grace," knowing as they do the impulsive nature of the Prince. No policy considerations, asserts the *Herald*, can justify his removal, and the whole affair savours of aggressive Imperialism, guaranteed to irritate and disgust the public mind.

Further, the measure was not even consonant with justice. The Prince had been stripped of many of his administrative powers and ceased therefore to be a source of danger to the Government. Could not he then have been kept on for a year or so and results watched? No, the Government thought and acted differently; but has not this awakened among the people feelings of mistrust and suspicion and effectually neutralised the good results Lord Curzon expects to reap from the Coronation Durbar?

VI.—MISCELLANEOUS.

HINDOO PATRIOT, 14th Feb. 1903.

Lord Curzon and the Chamber of Commerce.

221. Commenting on Lord Curzon's speech at the Chamber of Commerce Dinner, the *Hindoo Patriot* considers his reading of the protests in the Public Press regarding the growing influence of Chambers of Commerce all over the country to the practical exclusion of other accredited public bodies, as not a little unfortunate. The representative Indian Associations have more abiding stake and interest in the country than any Chamber of Commerce. Native public opinion has been very much in discount of late, and the Viceroy indicated it in a manner when he mentioned the particular local bodies to which the city improvement schemes would be referred

INDIAN MIRROR, 14th Feb. 1903.

Ibid.

222. The unprecedented success of the Chamber of Commerce Dinner ought, says the *Indian Mirror*, to be an eye-opener to the Indians in many respects. Whilst the Indian National Congress has undoubtedly done a lot of good, it has also been the innocent means of doing some harm. Since it came into being, many of the public bodies representing the interests of the people have lost a good deal of their former importance and been thrown in the background without the Congress being able to fill their place or make up to the people for their loss of importance and consequence. On account of its present state of existence, the Indians have dwindled and shrunk into insignificance, politically speaking, in the presence of the European Chambers of Commerce and Trades Associations whose representations are allowed to weigh with Government and determine its line of policy on most public questions.

It is a great pity that the Bengal Chamber of Commerce should be supreme in the counsels of the rulers of the land, and that Indian bodies should be nowhere.

BENGALEE 14th Feb. 1903.

Ibid.

223. Referring to the Viceroy's speech at this dinner, the *Bengalee* acknowledges being the newspaper which remarked that Lord Curzon was "under the thumb of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce." It sees no reason to modify that opinion, and gives in support of its assertion the absolute and unconditional surrender of the Government position at the dictation of an imperious Chamber in

connection with the Bill which sought to raise the wages of the Assam cooly, as also the influence exercised in the matter of the Tea Cess Bill. The spirit in which the question of the city improvement scheme is approached shows as if the sole object was the benefit of Trade and Commerce.

The Calcutta Municipal Bill and the policy which underlay it was also determined by the attitude of the Chamber. Its object was, as openly stated in the debates in Council, to reduce the Hindu majority and to transfer the control of the Municipality to the European community, represented by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

Lord Curzon and the Chamber of Commerce.

224. The *Bengalee*, reverting to the Viceroy's address at the Bengal Chamber of Commerce Dinner, says that it has looked in vain in His Excellency's record of the last four years, for the political impulse which will qualify the people of India for the higher rights of citizenship, or the political measure which promises an accession of political rights to the people. That monumental piece of unwisdom, which is embodied in the Calcutta Municipal Act, has had for its net result the ruthless exclusion of Hindus and Muhammadans from all participation in local municipal affairs, and stands as the one measure of Lord Curzon's administration which will be regarded as reactionary and retrograde and in conflict with British statesmanship of the past and unworthy of the traditions of the 19th century. BENGALEE, 15th Feb. 1903.

Ibid.

225. *Power and Guardian* finds it impossible to do the Viceroy's speech at the Chamber of Commerce meeting that amount of justice which it deserves. It contains queer suggestions, dogmatisms and autocratic utterances which show that Lord Curzon chose to play the *rôle* more of a theoriser than that of a practical statesman. One of the most baneful effects of His Excellency's speech will be to encourage the Corporation of Calcutta to squeeze the last drop of blood out of the rate-payers with a view to beautify the city in the way suggested. What is apparently wanting in the Viceroy is the tactfulness of making a situation consistent with the means available. POWER AND GUARDIAN, 15th Feb. 1903.

Ibid.

226. The address of Lord Curzon at the Bengal Chamber of Commerce very favourably impressed the *Indian Mirror*, but after its glamour had passed away, the speech had for the journal only one interpretation, *viz.*, that India is for Europeans and that the Indians are nowhere. INDIAN MIRROR, 15th Feb. 1903.

It remarks that Lord Curzon's protest that he was not under the thumb of the Chamber of Commerce was not supported by the speech of Sir Patrick Playfair, which followed, in which the boast was made that the "civil authorities are realizing the influence of the Chamber." It further points out that the Viceroy's reference to the Chamber speeding the parting and welcoming the incoming guest, as a "form of contract of mutual advantage," shows precisely the commercial relations existing between the Viceroy and the Chamber. In the journal's opinion the Viceroy has by his speech placed himself even in a worse position than when he took the chair of the Woodburn Memorial Meeting. His vindication was in the nature of giving himself away.

Ibid.

227. With reference to the Viceroy's speech, the *Hindu Patriot* says that while loud praises are being sung of the achievements of the present Municipal Corporation of Calcutta, nothing is being done or attempted for "real and inner Calcutta" which never meets the curious eyes of the globe-trotter—such places as Barabazar, Jorabagan, and Gurpur, and ill-scavenged lanes off Wellesley Street, Wellington Street, College and Cornwallis Streets, &c. HINDOO PATRIOT, 16th Feb. 1903.

Ibid.

228. The *Indian Nation* criticises Lord Curzon's speech adversely and pronounces it to be for the most part an ineffective reply to newspaper criticisms. The acerbity of some passages almost equals that of the speech Lord Dufferin made at St. Andrew's Dinner on the eve of his departure from this country. Though claiming to be interested and facinated with Calcutta, Lord Curzon has shortened rather than lengthened by a day the customary Viceregal stay in the capital of the Indian Empire. The improvements which he would effect as Chairman of the Corporation could no doubt be done by many INDIAN NATION, 16th Feb. 1903.

a person less gifted than the Viceroy if they were given the "large conditions." But a very free-hand indeed is wanted. His Excellency does not appreciate the scope and effect of the new municipal law passed by himself. Municipal Self-Government has received its death-kneel, and the new system has proved to be inferior to the old. Evils have arisen which exist, though the Viceroy may not be aware of them His desire to obtain information is very creditable, but Lord Curzon should look for it in the minds and hearts of of the people. If he privately and secretly questioned men belonging to different paths of life and assured them that they need have no fear of the law of defamation, he would obtain information the like of which may not have reached him yet, and a great deal of which would probably startle him.

The language of contempt used with reference to the drain theory as connected with the impoverishment of India, only tends to show the weakness of the Viceroy's contention. The rebuke to native capitalists is sympathised with, but the *Nation* fails to see how the people of the country gain by the enterprise of Europeans.

INDIAN MIRROR, 7th Feb. 1903.

Lord Curzon and the Chamber of Commerce.

229 Lord Curzon, says the *Indian Mirror* with regard to his latest speech, pins his reputation for all time to his capacity of becoming the municipal autocrat of Calcutta. The contingency of his assuming such an office is regarded as a calamity which even his European *confréres* and friends, the *muhasibs* of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, would deplore. When snuffing out the old Corporation the Viceroy promised to bestow on Calcutta the Municipal Government which was the delight and blessing of Bombay, but his present statements differ entirely from his initial promise. His own scheme proved that he was grossly deceiving himself, or had been so deceived by somebody. The new Municipal Corporation here has not the faintest resemblance to the one in Bombay. Lord Curzon's plan reveals the death-knell of Local Self-Government.

INDIAN EMPIRE, 17th Feb. 1903.

Ibid.

230. Referring to the surprise expressed by Lord Curzon at the people of India deploring the introduction of foreign capital, the *Indian Empire* says that it is not the introduction of foreign capital so much that is taken exception to, as the manner of introduction. No other country guarantees the payments of a certain rate of interest from the public exchequer towards foreign capital. Why should India do so?

Whilst recognising the benefits foreign capital has conferred upon India, the *Empire* is of opinion that no country can enjoy the fruits of its enterprise which does not employ its own capital. The journal accordingly urges the more extended application of Indian capital, and calls upon the Government to encourage the movement by patronising the indigenous products of the country. What the people want is practical help; merely calling upon them to use more largely their own resources will not do.

BENGALEE, 17th Feb. 1903.

Ibid.

231. The *Bengalee* differs from the views expressed by Lord Curzon at the Chamber of Commerce Dinner as regards the economic effect of the employment of foreign capital in India. There are branches of industry in which the employment of foreign capital means irreparable loss to the country. The draining of the Kolar Gold-fields is referred to as an example of this enormous loss and infinitesimal gain. This is true of the entire mining industry, so far as it is worked by foreign capital and controlled by foreign agency. The Government should have sought to protect the mines until indigenous capital and enterprise had been fully qualified to deal with them. The salvation of the Indian lies in the industries, and a separate Mining College should be established in Bengal. The Government has not applied itself to the duty of protecting the industries with the earnestness it deserves.

AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA, 17th Feb. 1903.

Ibid.

232. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* comments on the want of dignity and self-respect shown by two contemporaries who lay claim to the authorship of the statement that Lord Curzon was under the thumb of the Chamber of Commerce. The Indian publicist, to exercise any influence, should for the love of his country confine himself to give advice as to what will serve its interest.

Referring to the question of municipal reform which was touched on in His Excellency's speech, the *Patrika* terms Lord Curzon's sanction of the destruction of the old municipality a great blunder. Goaded to despair by the rule of two successive imbecile Viceroys, the people of India again allowed hope to animate them when they found a new Viceroy, with brilliant powers, a warm heart, and large promises. They were sleeping quietly with hope in their hearts, when suddenly they were startled to find that the hand from which they expected protection and blessing, had dealt them a severe blow. It hopes that His Excellency will try his best to repair the mischief before he leaves these shores.

Lord Curzon and the Chamber of Commerce

233. The same journal apologises for the mistake made in misquoting the word *contact* in its foregoing article, and while agreeing with Lord Curzon's advice to Indian capitalists, quotes the *Statesman* and *Poineer* to show that even the approval of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce is no index to even European public opinion. AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA, 18th Feb. 1903.

234. The interpretation of the Viceroy's formula, pronounced at the Chamber of Commerce Dinner, of "sufficient funds and a free hand," with respect to improvements in Calcutta, is understood by the *Bengalee* to be the absence of any control by the popular representatives over the municipal exchequer and administration. BENGALEE, 18th Feb 1903.

Ibid.

It also spells to the residents of the Northern division the imposition of self-denying ordinances. The want, for instance, of unfiltered water for flushing upper floor privies is, in view of the increase of plague, felt very keenly. Then, again, the lighting and cleansing of the street are far from satisfactory, while in selected portions of the southern parts of the city the process of improvement is going on regardless of expense. This is called giving the executive a free hand, and it is for this that unlimited funds are demanded.

The site of the Victoria Memorial Hall.

235. The *Indian Mirror* thinks that the agitation set up by the Anglo-Indian Press against the proposed site for the erection of the Victoria Memorial Hall is convincing. For its own part, the *Mirror* not only objects to the maidan being built upon on principle, but also from the health point of view. It leaves the *military* phase of the question to the Bill which is to be introduced for keeping land in the vicinity of works of defence free from buildings and other obstructions, and hopes that the Viceroy and his advisers will not exempt Calcutta from the operation of the measure. INDIAN MIRROR, 20th Feb. 1903.

The Sittana Campaign and the Indian Press.

236. Its would give intense satisfaction to a good many Englishmen, writes the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, if the Indian papers were securely gagged. But what would be the state of India if such a thing ever came to pass? The rulers would be enveloped in a dense fog, and the most ordinary circumstances would assume the most frightful shapes; whereas now they move about in confidence aided by the light of the Native Press which discovers the minutest things concealed in Indian Society. AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA, 21st Feb. 1903.

The Sepoy Mutiny could not have been organised if the country had then a free and vigorous press. The Mussalmans, in the Sittana campaign, could not also have hatched the conspiracy if we had newspapers at the time. Now that we have a watchful press, such things are almost impossible. Yet there are foolish men who would be delighted to see the freedom of the Indian press destroyed.

OFFICE OF THE INSPR.-GENERAL OF POLICE, L. P.,
WRITERS' BUILDINGS,
The 21st February 1903.

H. B. ST. LEGER,
Asst. to the Inspr.-General of Police, L. P.

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